

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
POLLUTION REPORT

US EPA RECORDS CENTER REGION 5



545217

I. HEADING

Date: January 8, 1996
Subject: ~~Karl's Retreading Tire Fire~~ Traverse City, Grand
Traverse County, Michigan
From: Rose Ellison, OSC, U.S. EPA, RS1, Grosse Ile,
Michigan
To:
D. Dietrich Attn: T. Johnson, USEPA, OSWER, Washington, D.C.
(FAX: 703-603-9116)
D. Ullrich, Dep. Reg. Admin., USEPA, Chicago, IL.....
(FAX: 312-353-1120)
B. Kush, RSIV, Chicago, IL..... (FAX: 312-353-9176)
R. Karl, Chief, EERB, Chicago, IL..... (FAX: 312-353-9176)
B. Messenger, Chief, ESS, Chicago, IL... (FAX: 312-353-9176)
T. Kruger, ORC, Chicago, IL..... (FAX: 312-886-7160)
M. McCue, Attn: H. Valetkevitch, OPA, Chicago, IL.....
(FAX: 312-353-1155)
J. El-Zein Acting Chief, EERB, RS1, Grosse Ile, MI.....
(FAX: 313-692-7677)
D. Darnell, Supv., ERD, MDNR, Cadillac, MI (FAX: 616-775-9671)
Duty Officer, Nat. Response Center, Washington D.C. (USMAIL)
Don Henne, U.S. Dept. Interior, Philadelphia, PA.....
(FAX: 215-597-9845)
D. Scott, Grand Traverse County EM, (FAX: 616-922-4553)

POLREP No.: ~~POLREP 4~~ (Emergency Response)

II. BACKGROUND

Site No.:	ZZ
Response Authority:	CERCLA
CERCLIS No.:	-
NPL Status:	No
Start Date:	December 30, 1995
Demobilization Date:	N/A
Completion Date:	N/A

III. SITE INFORMATION

- A. Incident Category Tire Fire at Scrap Tire Facility
B. Site Description and Location

1. Site location

The Karl's Retreading Tire Fire (KR) site is an emergency response to a tire fire located south of Traverse City, Grand Traverse County, Michigan (44° 39.7'N, 85°40.0'W). The KR site is an approximately 4.5 acre property that consists of a building with loading dock, several semi-trailers,

and 500,000 shredded and whole tires staged on 1 acre of the parcel. The tires are in piles that range from 4 feet up to 30 feet in height. The site is currently owned by Steve Hubert.

The site is bordered by residences located on Compton Court to the west, Sawyer Woods Drive to the north, forested land to the south, and light industry and residences to the east. The site is in a rural/residential/ area with some light industry. An elementary school (Blair Elementary) is located across Sawyer Road and approximately 500 feet to the east of the KR site. Residences are located approximately 300 feet to the west of the fire as well as within 500 feet to the south and east of the site. Cox Pond and Beitner Creek are located approximately 1/3 mile north of the site.

IV. RESPONSE INFORMATION

A. Situation

1. Current situation

The Karl's Retreading Tire Fire is an active tire recycling facility. On December 29, 1995, at approximately 0930 hours, the fire was ignited by overheating of scrap tire material by the on-site tire shredder. The U.S. EPA OSC and the Technical Assistance Team (TAT) mobilized to site on December 30, 1995, and, at the request of the Incident Commander, provided technical assistance and air monitoring support. Smoke generated by the fire was monitored for chemical constituents and particulates both at the fire and downwind. The property owner assumed financial responsibility for the fire fighting/cleanup activities and hired Northern A-1, a private contractor, to assist.

The U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Strike Team mobilized to site on December 31, 1995, to assist in air monitoring and site documentation. Northern A-1 and fire fighters addressed the burning tire piles by pulling them apart and dumping the tires into pits and trenches excavated into the ground. The burning material is then covered with soil.

A set pattern of air monitoring stations were established and assessed twice daily. In addition, random readings were collected downwind of the fire each day to assess the amount and

content of smoke leaving the site. Continuous air monitoring occurs daily and is moved to intercept the smoke plume. Readings indicate nuisance levels of particulates, rather than hazardous levels. No elevated readings of organic vapors, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, or other components were detected.

On January 2, 1995, fire fighters began to be paid with funds appropriated by Grand Traverse County. The media request by the Incident Commander for volunteers has generated an outpouring of offers of personnel from fire departments across the state. The U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Traverse City assisted the effort by providing aerial overflight of the fire with EPA personnel on board. This allowed video documentation of the fire from the air.

January 3, 1996: The fire fighting activities continue through mechanical means with fire fighters providing safety support. Due to the Incident Commander's media request for assistance, there are adequate numbers of volunteers to support fire fighting efforts through this weekend. A clerk from the ERCS contractor was mobilized to the site on January 3, then released when the PRP agreed to continue to finance operations. Representatives from DEQ Air Quality arrived on site to augment U.S. EPA air monitoring efforts.

January 4, 1996: The fire fighting activities continue through mechanical means with fire fighters providing safety support. Due to a shift in the direction of the smoke plume, a second school, Silver Lake School, contacted the command post inquiring about possible impacts. The OSC, TAT and USCG performed air monitoring at Silver Lake School and detected no readings above background. Odors present at the school were attributed to odors from wood burning at a nearby home.

Air sampling for organics, PAHs, and Gillian filter cartridges for titanium dioxide and carbon black was conducted by TAT and Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.

Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa/Chippewa Indians have donated \$20,000 specifically to assist in the local-fire fighting activities.

January 5, 1996: The fire fighting activities continue through mechanical means with fire fighters providing safety support. A demonstration of the "Cold Fire" material was unsuccessful, utilizing too much water and producing steam which held fire particulates lower to the ground.

2. Removal activities to date

January 6, 1996: The fire fighting activities continue through mechanical means with fire fighters providing safety support. Reviews of available literature, information on the Internet, and other general information on tire fires were being conducted today. Review of available literature and conversations with various sources suggest that attempting to dismantle the tire chip pile through mechanical means could cause the material to explode, endangering personnel. In light of this, the Incident Commander and the OSC are considering allowing the chip pile to burn down for several weeks before attacking it. Other alternatives are still being investigated.

Air monitoring with both handheld and stationary air samplers continues. Summa canisters and Gillian cartridges are being collected for particulates and organic vapors.

January 7, 1996: The fire fighting activities continue through mechanical means with fire fighters providing safety support. Review of information on Internet regarding tire fires continued.

The Incident Commander informs the school board that the plan is to have the Command Post out of the school by January 11 or 12 so that school may resume in the Blair Elementary building on January 16, 1996. However, the fire will probably not be completely out at that time. School board is uncertain whether school should resume at the Sawyer Road location prior to complete extinguishment of the fire.

Press briefings decreased to one daily at 1530 hours due to reducing media interest. Daily afteraction meeting rescheduled to between 1700 and 1730 hours.

The Incident Command is coordinating with Cherry County Airport to borrow their crash rescue vehicle with a 760 psi water cannon in order to probe the shred pile remotely.

USCG Air Station Traverse City provided a helicopter overflight to OSC Ellison and Incident Commander in order to view fire fighting progress.

Air monitoring with summa canisters (organics), Hi-volume samplers (PAHs), and Gillian pumps (titanium dioxide/carbon black) completed.

B. Planned Removal Activities

1. Continue monitoring of random and stationary air sampling points for particulates, organic vapors, and other potentially fire generated constituents.
2. Ship air samples for full laboratory analyses.
3. Northern A-1 will continue to fight the tire fire with the safety support of the fire fighters.
4. Continue to evaluate ongoing potential threat to the surrounding residents and employees of businesses.
5. Conduct media briefings.
6. Conduct public meeting on January 9, 1996, at the Blair Township Hall for concerned area residents.
7. Continue scanning the Internet for reference material.

C. Next Steps

Continue to operate tire fire fighting activities with safety support of local and visiting fire fighters.

D. Key Issues

The Blair Elementary School was closed due to the Christmas and New Years holidays until January 2, 1996. On January 1, 1996, the school was closed from January 2, 1996, until January 12, 1996, due to the concern about wind shifts generating dust clouds that would go toward the school and the fact that the school is being used as the command post for the incident.

Grand Traverse County has assumed financial responsibility for paying the fire fighters. Levels of volunteers must be monitored and maintained to allow operations to continue.

Residents, living to the west and south of the site were voluntarily evacuated. The following numbers of persons were voluntarily evacuated on the following days: 6 persons on 12/29/95, 8 persons on 12/31/95, and 48 persons on 1/1/96. Residences have been evacuated on an as need basis after 1/1/96.

Chemical suppression methods to augment the mechanical fire fighting effort are being evaluated on a continuing basis.

A representative from Congressman Stupak's office arrived on-site to assess the situation. The Congressman is expected to be on-site on January 8, 1996.

V. COST INFORMATION

Estimated costs as of January 7, 1996:

	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Spent</u>	<u>Remaining</u>
TAT	\$ 50,000	\$ 30,277	\$ 19,723
U.S. EPA	\$ 20,000	\$ 9,990	\$ 10,010
USCG AST	<u>\$ 30,000</u>	<u>\$ 10,421</u>	<u>\$ 19,579</u>
TOTAL:	\$ 100,000	\$ 50,688	\$ 49,312